

15 January 1993

Subject: Tri-Cities Landfill, Arizona

From: Alexis Strauss, W-1 *AS*

To: Senior Staff

TriCities landfill is a private, profit-making landfill owned and operated by the Salt River/Pima Maricopa Indian Community on tribal land immediately east of Phoenix. On the agenda for the Tuesday, January 19 senior staff meeting is a discussion of the Tri-Cities landfill, and what our various roles may be in addressing this problem. I participated in a conference call yesterday with Sen. McCain's office, the Governor's office, Ed Fox of ADEQ and the Corps of Engineers, and thought I'd provide the following update. Action items are listed on the next page, the last item.

A. SHORT-TERM ACTIONS

1. Emergency/short-term response:

The tribe is placing rocks along an edge of the fill, in essence a small levee, to divert flow around the site, to reduce further scouring. The Corps has concluded nothing else can be done until water levels recede. The edges and banks of the site are so unstable as to prevent use of heavy equipment. Water levels are still rising, and another storm is expected this weekend. The State agencies are meeting today to assess damages to date, as a basis for requesting the Federal emergency declaration from FEMA. If this declaration is made, FEMA could ask the Corps to participate in clean-up (Corps currently has no authority). EPA R9 HWMD concluded, finding no evidence of hazardous substances, that there was no emergency action we needed to take.

2. Removing solid waste from the Salt River

The cities which dispose of muni solid waste at the Tribe's landfill (Scottsdale and Mesa) and the Tribe have volunteered to assist in removing trash from the river when water levels recede. This is not a very high priority with ADEQ, which faces raw sewage flows in rural communities and the vulnerability of Coolidge Dam.

3. Alternative landfill sites

Scottsdale and Mesa continue to take trash to Tri-Cities (!!!), because it is so much cheaper (\$14/ton, versus \$21-26/ton at City of Phoenix landfills). However, both the City of Phoenix and Maricopa County have volunteered to take their trash free for one month, but Scottsdale and Mesa have not taken advantage of this offer. When this site flooded last year, Tempe ceased taking its trash to TriCities, while Scottsdale and Mesa negotiated higher tipping fees with the tribe for the purpose of stabilizing and closing this site. Instead, the Tribe has used the revenue to operate a new open dump site nearby.

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